

Steps for Developing a Plan for Your Congregation Facilities

- 1) A communications network is essential. There should be a continually updated list of all the congregational members' phone numbers (office, home, and mobile). There should be a copy of the list kept at the house of worship and the Disaster Response Coordinator and the religious leader should have copies.
- 2) Designate one remote phone number where an emergency message can be recorded and make sure all parishioners know that number and understand its function.
- 3) Identify vulnerable congregation members. These members may be aged, living alone, living in trailers, have health problems, and/or are living in areas prone to disasters. When a warning of a potential disaster is issued have a designated person call these members to ensure that they are in safe areas.
- 4) Appoint a Disaster Response Coordinator and a Disaster Response Committee for the congregation to coordinate and oversee preparedness efforts, communications, and response to an emergency or disaster.
- 5) Formulate plans for evacuation in case of emergency or disaster. There should be a plan for evacuating the building during the week and when the congregation meets and member traffic is high.
- 6) Inspect all buildings. Are exits clearly marked? Do the smoke detectors have fresh batteries? Are the fire-extinguishers up-to-date?
- 7) Check that your insurance policy meets the minimum requirements of your house of worship by your mortgage holder. Are the art and musical instruments covered? Books? Alters?
- 8) Practice the communication and evacuation parts of your plan on a regular basis.